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## Tourney run ends with 10-4 defeat

### Blue Raiders fall one game short of championship

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**MOBILE, Ala.** - Home runs from Joey Butler and Drew Anderson highlighted a five-run seventh inning that broke open a tie contest, as New Orleans defeated Middle Tennessee, 10-4, Saturday in the Sun Belt Championships at Stanky Field, ending the Blue Raiders season after another long run in the conference tournament.

Middle Tennessee (32-28) fell behind, 4-0, in the contest, the third between the two teams in three days in the tournament and the sixth meeting this season. But the Blue Raiders battled back, tying the game with two runs in the fourth and two more in the fifth.

Wildness on the part of the Blue Raider pitching staff contributed heavily to the five-run seventh inning for UNO, as four Middle Tennessee hurlers issued four walks in the frame. Butler hit a two-run homer and Anderson a three-run shot in the inning, sending the Privateers into the tournament championship game.

Blake McDade had an RBI single and Zach Barrett drove in a run with a ground ball in the fourth and the Blue Raiders scored on a wild pitch and a McDade grounder in the fifth. But Middle Tennessee stranded eight runners in the contest, including two runners in the fourth.

[Brett Smalley](#) (2-5) took the loss for the Blue Raiders despite pitching very well. Smalley retired seven of the nine batters he faced until the seventh, when he threw four straight balls for Brandon Bowser and fell behind Butler 3-1 before allowing a line drive homer that just cleared the wall and barely stayed fair.

David Burch (1-1) tossed four shutout innings to get the win for UNO (36-24), giving up three hits, walking two and striking out three.

[Wayne Kendrick](#) went 2-for-5 with a run in the contest, setting the single-season hits record at Middle Tennessee, finishing the year with an even 100 hits. He is just the eighth player in Sun Belt history to hit the century mark in hits in one season.

[Adam Warren](#) had three hits and scored twice, while McDade drove in two runs.

"We got behind early but battled back and never quit," head coach Steve Peterson said. "We just didn't score enough runs. [Brett] Smalley threw very well and I almost didn't start him in the [seventh], but the walks really killed us and you cannot do that against a good team. They made us pay for my mistakes and that's the mark of a good team."

The Privateers scored first with a run in the second inning, but it could have been worse. Johnny Giovatella doubled to leadoff and moved to third on Josh Tarnow's line out to center. UNO loaded the bases when Anderson walked and Greg Wolfe was hit. Ryan Eden drove in the run with a ground ball to first for a 1-0 Privateers lead.

In the UNO third Bowser led off with a single and Butler followed with a single to right, putting runners on the corners. T.J. Baxter then lined out to left, plating Bowser for a 2-0 edge.

The Privateers added two more runs in the fourth on three hits, all with two outs. Eden grounded a double just inside the third base bag and Jarrod Ware followed with an RBI single through the leftside. Bowser then walked before Butler singled to center, plating Ware for a 4-0 UNO advantage.


The Blue Raiders cut the deficit in half in the bottom of the inning on four hits and missed a chance to add at least one more run.

Warren singled to leadoff and [Rawley Bishop](#) followed with a double down the leftfield line. McDade singled to leftcenter, scoring Warren, and Barrett's grounder to the leftside plated Bishop.

Box then singled to rightcenter, putting runners on the corners. [Myles Ervin](#) hit a chopper back to the mound, but Barrett was tagged out at the plate trying to score. Drew Robertson grounded out to end the inning with UNO still leading, 4-2.

The Blue Raiders scored twice more in the fifth to tie the contest. Kendrick laid down a perfect bunt with one out, breaking the



Senior Wayne Kendrick had two hits in Middle Tennessee's 10-4 loss to New Orleans on Saturday, setting the single-season hits record and ending his year with an even 100 hits. (MT) 

single-season hits record in the process. Warren then hit a slicing double down the rightfield line and Kendrick scored one pitch later on a wild pitch. After a walk to Bishop, McDade's grounder to second plated Warren, tying the game at four.

Smalley threw very well until the seventh when he threw six straight balls to start the inning, walking Bowser and falling behind 2-0 to Butler. On a 3-1 pitch Butler lined a ball down the leftfield line that stayed just fair and cleared the leftfield wall by maybe a foot, a two-run homer to give the Privateers the lead.

Baxter walked, as did Giovatella, and Baxter moved to third when ball four to Giovatella went to the backstop. Tarnow then grounded to third and Baxter was tagged out at the plate. Baxter lowered his shoulder when Robertson applied the tag and was thrown out of the game by home plate umpire Kevin Assmann for malicious intent.

Anderson followed with the big blow, hitting a hanging breaking ball from [Brett Reilley](#) over the wall in left for his 15th homer of the year and a 9-4 UNO lead.

UNO defensive replacement Jerad Comarda hit a solo homer in the ninth for the final run of the game.

Middle Tennessee got two singles in the bottom of the ninth from pinch-hitter [Matt Campbell](#) and Kendrick, but Warren bounced into a game-ending 4-6-3 doubleplay.

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